

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

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AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T BEIRUT 4935

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: LE, US, PEPR
SUBJECT: LEBANESE-AMERICAN RELATIONS

1. LEBANESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE EXPRESSED
GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT WITH UNITED STATES ADVICE TO THE
GOL TO SEND A LEBANESE ARMY UNIT TO SOUTH LEBANON:

-- FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS ON AUGUST 11 PUBLICLY
CRITICIZED USG FOR PRESENTING UNREALISTIC PROPOSALS
ON WAYS OF RESOLVING THE CRISIS INVOLVING THE LEBANESE
ARMY UNIT HALTED AT KAWKABA (BEIRUT 3677). ACCORDING
TO IKE, BOUTROS TOLD REPORTERS: "AMBASSADOR PARKER'S
CONCEPTION OF THE SITUATION IS LACKING IN REALISM IN
MORE THAN ONE ASPECT. HIS CONCEPTION DOES NOT SUB-
STANTIATE CERTAIN CONSIDERATIONS AND, FOR THAT REASON,
WE HAVE NOT MADE PROGRESS." KARIM PAKRADOUNI TOLD
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EMBOFF AUGUST 12 THAT BOUTROS HAD MADE VIRTUALLY SAME
REMARKS TO HIM IN PRIVATE.

-- IN A CONVERSATION WITH AMIN GEMAYEL, PRESIDENT
SARKIS COMPLAINED THAT THE USG HAD PUSHED THE GOL
INTO SENDING THE LEBANESE ARMY SOUTH (SEE BEIRUT 4839).
SARKIS ALSO ALLEGED THAT THE USG HAD TOLD GOL THAT

ISRAELIS WOULD LET LEBANESE ARMY INTO SOUTH, WHEN IN FACT THIS WAS NOT TRUE.

-- PRIME MINISTER SALIM AL-HOSS IN AN INTERVIEW CARRIED BY THE WEEKLY MONDAY MORNING ON AUGUST 21 SAID THAT LEBANON "FELT LET DOWN BY THE UNITED STATES, BECAUSE THE UNITED STATES WAS ONE OF THE COUNTRIES WHICH ENCOURAGED US TO DISPATCH AN ARMY UNIT TO THE SOUTH" (SEE BEIRUT 4841). HOSS ADDED THAT AMBASSADOR LEONARD AND MR. HOWELL HAD "STRESSED THE URGENCY OF DISPATCHING AN ARMY UNIT TO THE SOUTH." HOSS CLAIMED THAT HE WAS "ASSURED OF U.S. INTERVENTION WHENEVER NECESSARY TO OVERCOME ANY HINDRANCE THAT MIGHT ARISE FROM THE SIDE OF ISRAEL."

-- WHEN U.N. UNDER SECRETARY URQUHART VISITED BEIRUT AUGUST 19, LEBANESE OFFICIALS ASSERTED THAT THE LACK OF IMPLEMENTATION OF UN RESOLUTION 425 REFLECTED BADLY ON THE UN AND THE RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL, PARTICULARLY THE UNITED STATES, FOR GIVING THE LEBANESE ADVICE ON THE MOVE TO THE SOUTH THAT DID NOT WORK OUT IN PRACTICE (SEE BEIRUT 4845). THE LEBANESE OFFICIALS TOLD URQUHART THAT AMBASSADOR PARKER'S "LAST MINUTE NOCTURNAL PHONE CALL SAYING STOP" WAS RECEIVED TOO LATE.

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2. NOW THE RESPECTED MIDDLE EAST REPORTER IN ITS "NEWS ANALYSIS" ON AUGUST 23 HAS SAID:

-- "U.S. AMBASSADOR RICHARD PARKER LAST WEEKEND TOOK OFF ON A SUMMER HOLIDAY IN EUROPE AND LEFT BEHIND WHAT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT REGARDS AS SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS: THE DEADLOCK IN SOUTHERN LEBANON.

-- "NOT SINCE THE NYPD USED DOGS TO SNIFF THE LEBANESE PRESIDENTIAL LUGGAGE AT KENNEDY AIRPORT FOR HASHISH IN THE FALL OF 1974 HAVE LEBANESE-AMERICAN RELATIONS BEEN AS BAD AS THEY ARE TODAY. FORMER PRESIDENT SULEIMAN FRANJIYAH, WHOSE PARTY WAS INVOLVED IN THE HUMILIATION AT THE HANDS OF THE AMERICAN AUTHORITIES, REMARKED A FEW DAYS AGO WHEN TOLD ABOUT THE U.S. ATTITUDE ON THE SOUTH: 'WHAT ELSE CAN YOU EXPECT FROM THE AMERICANS?'"

3. COMMENT: LEBANESE CRITICISM OF THE U.S. IS TO A GREAT EXTENT DISINGENUOUS. THE LEBANESE THEMSELVES PLANNED THE OPERATION POORLY AND HAD INACCURATE INTELLIGENCE ON THE

SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON. JOHNNY ABDO, FOR EXAMPLE, CLAIMED THAT HE KNEW SA'AD HADDAD AND HIS CHRISTIAN FIGHTERS WOULD RALLY TO THE SIDE OF THE LEBANESE ARMY. NEVERTHELESS THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT LEBANESE OFFICIALS HAVE SEEN FIT TO BLAME THE U.S. FOR KAWKABA AND TO CLAIM THAT WE DID NOT ADEQUATELY WARN THEM OF THE DANGERS INVOLVED. THE LEBANESE HAVE A PROCLIVITY FOR LOOKING FOR SCAPEGOATS RATHER THAN ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY THEMSELVES. THUS IN THE PRESENT STAGE OF EVOLUTION OF THE CLOSE GOL-USG RELATIONSHIP, THE LEBANESE ARE LIKELY TO BLAME US FOR WHATEVER GOES WRONG--WHATEVER WE DO OR DO NOT DO--WHEN THEY HAVE A U.S. POSITION TO HANG SUCH BLAME ON.

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